526 857 enthusiasts may dance every afternoon at The Gate, but they do not draw a large circle of spectators.

541 ●536 On one of the rare bright days that we were blessed with, word was sent us that a special show was being got up for that evening if we would care to come. We reached "The Gate" just before dusk and found a stone sofa duly carpeted for us. As the evening grew darker, the crowd became larger and the general feeling of infectious excitement increased, till at last the organizers of the show went round the crowd using their long sleeves as conductors' batons to mark time for the magnificent Ha-Ha-Ha and the unison clapping they so much enjoy which now announced the arrival of the performers. A lot of young men had got themselves up in various disguises, pairs of them stooping under a blanket with a horse's head fixed in front, pranced about most realistically under two boy-riders. Two other pairs were got up as markhor with real horns in front, while a fantastic huntsman with an aged muzzle-loading matchlock stalked them with exaggerated caution. Five or six were dressed up as women with silken veils to hide their moustaches. The best of all were two bent old men with flowing white beards; they were dressed in sheepskins with huge humps on their backs, and tottered very effectively on stout sticks. They contrived to look very aged and very frail. Then they got up a sham quarrel about the wife of one whom the other was supposed to have stolen. Thereupon they laid about each other with their cudgels—very carefully smiting only each other's well-padded humps—and did amazing leaps with their staves as jumping poles, the one lighting on the other's back and rolling him in the dust. This excellent horseplay was wildly applauded.

There were two absurd little boys with tiny besoms who made admirable clowns. They fussed about, sweeping the ground just in front of the dancers and choking everyone with dust, getting kicked out of the way and looking innocently pained at being so misunderstood. When anyone was knocked down in the rough and tumble they would officiously dash up to brush him down and get cuffed for their pains.

Altogether it was an extremely clever rag, mostly nonsense

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

and horseplay, of course, but with both humour and first-class mimicry. A lot of the witticisms were lost on us, being in the nature of "family jokes" only to be understood by the initiate, but they must have hit the mark, for they brought down the house. At one point one of the humped old men produced a mysterious black box from under his sheepskin and flung himself into a skilful caricature of DL taking photographs, pacing distances, peeping through view-finders, jotting things in notebooks, etc., etc. This was the star turn, and had been kept for the end. It was greeted with roars and howls of laughter, in which we joined till our sides ached.

After about half an hour, when everybody had been beaten and banged and rolled about enough to be tired out, we scattered home, surprised afresh at the magic in the air that made a show like this possible at 19° F. on a winter evening.

As we climbed home the great mountains of Nagir across the river were looking their best in the evening light with massed patches of fresh-fallen snow and Raka resplendent in a new silver satin coat. But in many ways the winter snows—on the rare occasions when you can see them at all—are disappointing. We had pictured the whole land above, say, 10,000 feet one mass of snow; but in fact most of the cliffs and slopes are far too steep to *hold* snow, however much may fall, and while you do get magnificent stretches of pure white these are spoiled artistically by intervening scars of black and brown, khaki or dull grey. The topmost peak of Raka herself is a sheer rock-face of some thousands of feet whose grey austerity renders it almost invisible above the eternal snows beneath.

We had now reached the month which the people call "Crazy January," with its sudden and erratic storms of wind, and when the wind chooses to roar down these gorges from the glaciers then, by Jove! you do feel a temperature of 19°. We personally were lucky, for our bungalow was in a kind of sheltered pocket—a fact we regretted during the hot weather—and even when a wild wind was hurtling round it seemed just to miss our windows.

Our sponges had been frozen solid for weeks and our bathrooms were not places to linger in, but it was cosy near

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THE FIRST OF THE HARVEST

Men left at home in the village were now making pilgrimages towards the *tér* to fetch down the manure that their brothers up on the mountain side with the animals have been scrupulously collecting. They usually arrange to meet half way, the village brother taking up any supplies the other may need and the brother of the *tér* bringing down not only manure but butter and *brús*, a kind of preparation of dried curd not unlike cream cheese. The lads up at the *tér* have rather a jolly time. They take up only their oldest clothes, for the life is rough and the work is hard. Anywhere that there is a scrap of suitable ground they plant a little barley, harnessing themselves to the plough so as not to put work on to the horses or oxen they may have with them, who are considered to have earned a holiday. Each day at dawn they loose their animals, but keep a careful eye on them, and sometimes have hair-raising adventures in rescuing a beast which has fallen down a cliff. There used to be considerable danger from wild animals, but nowadays there are few of these surviving. Any family that lacks a spare son to take the animals up entrusts them to the care of some other, after a rather touching little ceremony in which the beasts are solemnly committed to the care of their new master, who is at the same time given a certain amount of grain with him as part of his fee. Milking, making butter, collecting the manure, tending the barley (if any), cooking their own food, corralling the animals at night, etc., occupy the herds the greater part of the time, but they find leisure enough for various games and feats of skill.

Every now and again they decide to supplement their scanty rations—the village can spare little enough to send with them —by the sacrifice of a goat and a feast of meat. The donor of the beast plays for the evening the rôle of Mir, appoints another as his Wazir, and they play-act their several parts with gusto. It is frankly admitted that the animal sacrificed to make this holiday usually is one of those whose owner is not present. When eventually the boy returns, minus one of the animals for which he was trustee, he formally announces the regrettable "loss" to its owner. The nature of the catastrophe is fully understood but not crudely stated. A wise owner is